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Bard

= = = = =

Be a flag, be quick
to belong to the air
move with it, a flag
is always with, can't
impose itself upon—
if only countries
acted like their flags.

But you can. You're
a person. Already
you have absorbed
the souls of countless beings
when you were born
and you'll die and give
your soul to countless
beings waiting for the air.
Right now you're just
their pretty flag, sailing
in the winds of time.

10 September 2010

= = = = =

Dear friend I'm trying
but it's not easy to write
when north is still west of me
and I'm trying to hide
from a sunrise that already
hides from me—I'm trying
listen but everything comes through
shaped like my ears—I want
to hear through another, to hear
the thing itself, not how it
sounds in me. O nervous
system little god inside
that holds all things in thrall.
Our meat just gives us
something to play with
while we try to think.

10 September 2010

= = = = =

Things being behavior
are more like chances
than like things,
molecules being sheer movement
material collisions are miracles—
what you bump your head on
is no realer than you
and you both are stars.
The physics here is sketchy
but the specious underpinning
of the matter world shows clear.

10 September 2010

= = = = =

for Cameron

And we also are collages
in the world

no place
we have not been

when you get off the train
in a new city
it is as if you've never left

you've always seen that castle
perched against the sun

that belltower

Croatia Vienna the Iron Gates

the monastery
where you have always said your prayers

but they weren't prayers and weren't yours
they were waiting for you

they said you

and you came.

You paste the buildings to the sky.

And there too we have always lived.

10 September 2010

{in dream/waking:}

Lying lazy Saturday
not yet seven
listen to the crows
a field away
a lot of them
or in my ear
right here.

11 September 2010

= = = = =

Lost nearly,
as a tugboat slipping
hawsers in mist
tree tops out of haze
descending as the light
lifts—

my great-uncle
ran one of those
around the harbor,
cut off from the family,
romantic, selfish, angry
a boat in fog.

11 September 2010

= = = = =

The mist has come down the hill and silenced the crows
so loud from six to seven. There'll likely be a sun in it
soon, the way things go, it's hard to keep him down, that
Yankee in the sky.

11.IX.10

= = = = =

Let me tell you everything I know:
tell everything you know
only after you've said everything else—

that is:
tell what you don't know.
That's the only thing words are good for.

Or otherwise how will I, listening,
ever know who I am?
We exist at the intersection
of two ignorances,
at the place called Knowing.

11 September 2010

MORE BAGATELLES

He spends a lot of time
waiting for trees.

I tell him that's silly
a tree will come when it's ready
waiting won't help.

I think I hear them coming now.

+ + +

Being there while being here
is the favored occupation
of the young. To make.
And make the made place
be there at the rim of this.
And move right in.

+ + +

Bagatelles only today no
sonatas no taut chaconnes,
a chirp or two
from a tired beak
then sit and look at the river
only there is no river.

+ + +

But keep the well running
who knows how deep the spirit
has to gouge before it touches
actual aquifer?

Deep me down,
halt me up the water sings,
and who are those children,
the water's sparkling is their eyes?

11 September 2010

SAINT FRANCIS FLYING INTO THE SKY

up from midtown



great breath or spirit
spurting wide-armed as
if those were wings
just because they fly

longitude of love
latitude of conscience

blood sprinkles from his hands
the pigeons baptize each other in his shade

everything is far
except here is everywhere.

11 September 2010

HEIDEGGER

Among the books in the Hannah Arendt collection was one I sat and read a while. It was signed by Heidegger (“Martin”) to her (“Hannah”) in his crabbed ungenerous hand. He lived in the mind more than most men of his time—from his handwriting, as from what we know of his life, all things outside the portals of thinking repelled him or scared him heartless. He was not good at it. He heard the snare drums of fascism out there, and mistook them for the peremptory logic of his indoor etymologies. Lost in his adoration of complexity he somehow saved himself from honesty, empathy, love—terms that have no place in his philosophy. And yet, and yet, no one in a century spoke that mind so well, or read so carefully the words of the long dead (Nietzsche, Heraclitus) while utterly deaf to the cries of the living.

12 September 2010

THIRD SET OF BAGATELLES

Is this a diary darling or a poem?

Is this rain or is it water?

*

The better crafted an artifact
the longer it will last and the less it will mean.
But by its sleek enduring
may yet accrue congruous intelligence
as it slips safe through time—
the Grecian Urn is hollow from the start.

*

So many witnesses
and no crime.

*

The crows are silent this morning
they must know something of this
and keep their distance.

*

The tree looks at the man:
what are you standing there for,
that's my job.
Each to each's own.
Otherwise the sun rains down.

*

How to help the world:
stay home.
Siste viator domi.
Stay home, traveler—
fulfill yourself
by abandoning your function,
revel in pure being,
leave the distances alone.

12 September 2010

THE URGENCIES

press back

the need to speak

presses back against the will to silence

will silence

I will not tell all I know

because then I wouldn't know it

knowledge shared is knowledge halved—

why teachers are such simpletons

even if they do wear blue a lot

and have soft hands

Keats told me this

one day in her tower,

only girls could keep him living

and the need to answer them

before they spoke

and do it in the exalted

shaping of the breath.

The promise. The vow. The poem.

Say only what you don't know

then nobody gets hurt,

the door swings open and you palaver
safe through Antarctic wildernesses
bare rock from the beginning
scoured clear of even snow—
this is the place you know

walk there towards your past future
waiting for your word

Address the animal then
the bird in the blood
thrills to sing
and make you listen to yourself
while dew evaporates
off morning cars
and traffic –that conversation
of place with itself—begins
in the mumble of listening

and that will be your word too.

13 September 2010

MAGYAR

My heart is a sieve
what's left in it
at the end of all
is the one I really love

szeretlek, of course.

13 September 2010

= = = = =

The trees toss,
the storm is coming
even if it never comes.

13.IX.10